

Mr. Speaker, this program has since its inception received broad bipartisan support in both Houses of Congress. It does what we want most Federal programs to do: runs on a shoestring, produces concrete results, reaches and benefits a wide array of individuals, involves only a small amount of Federal financial aid to any one recipient location, and requires no bureaucracy to run it. This program works and it puts people to work. I urge all Members to support this bill and I look forward to its quick passage.

#### TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL J. KOVACS

#### HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 30, 1997*

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the work and dedication of Michael J. Kovacs. Mr. Kovacs has worked tirelessly for over 15 years to educate the people in the south suburban communities of Chicago.

Mr. Kovacs has chosen to give back to his community by volunteering his time and valuable skills to the local cable industry. Over the years, in cooperation with Steve Klinherth and Kenny White of Continental Cablevision, Kovacs has reached out to local schools, churches, VFW's, chambers of commerce, and local elected officials with his film-making skills in an effort to keep the community informed on important issues in their area.

Michael Kovacs's commitment to providing service to his community deserves the highest commendation. His impact on Chicago's south suburban community is not only deserving of congressional recognition, but should also serve as a model for others to follow.

At a time when our Nation's leaders are asking the people of this country to make serving their community a core value of citizenship, honoring Michael Kovacs is both timely and appropriate.

I urge this body to identify and recognize others in their communities whose actions have so greatly benefited and enlightened America's communities.

#### NATIONAL WRITE YOUR CONGRESSMAN

#### HON. JIM RAMSTAD

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 30, 1997*

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, new technologies like electronic mail and the Internet have helped bring people closer than ever to the events in Congress. But one of the most instrumental groups in keeping people in touch with their representative, National Write Your Congressman, relies on technology that is as old as this country itself—the U.S. Postal Service.

National Write Your Congressman was founded in Dallas, TX, in 1958. For nearly 40 years, this important organization has helped constituents voice their opinions with monthly mailings that present both sides of controversial issues. Constituents are then asked to mark a ballot in favor of or against a legislative proposal, and return the ballot to their

Representative. National Write Your Congressman conducts frequent polls of its membership and informs Representatives of their results. They also keep Representatives' voting records on file, and frequently update their membership on the performance of the men and women who represent them.

I am particularly grateful to LeRoy and Erika Larson of Burnsville, MN, in my congressional district, who visited my office this week.

LeRoy and Erika's tireless efforts on behalf of National Write Your Congressman have enabled my Minnesota constituents to voice their opinion on legislation that directly affects their lives. At the same time, they have been proactive participants in the education of our citizenry, which helps build a more responsible America.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank National Write Your Congressman for their ongoing efforts to inform citizens of our activities in Washington and to inform us of our constituents' concerns. They are truly helping empower the people of this country and returning the government to the people it was created to serve.

#### MAJORITY OF HOUSE DEMOCRATS URGE INCLUSION OF MILITARY SPENDING IN BUDGET CUTS

#### HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 30, 1997*

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, with the budget negotiations going forward, many of us are disturbed by the apparent assumption that military spending should be continued at its current level while significant reductions are imposed on a wide range of important nonmilitary programs. Health care, environmental cleanup, education, job training, community development, transportation, international economic assistance—all of these are put seriously at risk by a decision to exempt military spending from any significant budget discipline.

While Democratic Members are naturally interested in supporting the President at this critical time, significantly more than half of the Democratic Caucus recently agreed to a letter which we sent to the President last Friday voicing our strong objections to important aspects of the budget negotiations as they have been reported.

To date, 111 of the Democratic Members of the House, along with our Independent colleague, have signed on to the letter in which we have told the President that "we strongly believe that a budget compromise must begin seriously the process of moving funds from the Pentagon and related agencies to the civilian side if we are to balance the budget while avoiding devastating cuts over the next 5 years in important nonmilitary programs."

The goal of reducing the deficit to zero by the year 2002 is very widely shared. The debate is not over whether or not to balance the budget, but whether to do so in a socially responsible way, which meets our obligation to deal with important social and economic problems to the extent that we can, or whether to do it in a way that will exacerbate these problems. Members of the House do not casually write to the President to voice strong objections to efforts to resolve our budget difficulty,

and I believe that the fact that so many of us have felt compelled to do so at this time is a point that should be noted here. It is precisely because many of us hope to see a budget compromise reached that we can support that we are making clear what we believe to be the essential elements of such a compromise in this way. Mr. Speaker, I ask that the text of the letter and the list of signers as of noon on Monday be printed here.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

*Washington, DC, April 25, 1997.*

Hon. WILLIAM J. CLINTON,  
*President, The White House,*  
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We wish to make clear our strong objections to any budget proposal which would maintain the current high level of military spending while reducing severely in real terms both discretionary spending on all non-military functions, and funding for Medicare and Medicaid. You have correctly noted the importance of adequate funding support for education, the environment and job training. We believe that there are other important priorities that must receive adequate funding support in the years ahead as well. Unfortunately, the action of the Republican majority in adding \$17 billion to the Pentagon's budget over the past two years has already greatly exacerbated the difficulties we face in providing adequate funds for many of these programs, within the context of a balanced budget by the year 2002. And we are concerned that current proposals from the Republican leadership seek to make this bad situation even worse.

Many of us have been active in past years in seeking significantly greater contributions from our wealthy European, Asian and Middle Eastern allies in contributing to common defense concerns. We have also opposed the development or procurement of extremely expensive weapons which had originally been designed for use in the context of the military competition with a heavily armed Soviet Union. And we believe that there has been an unwillingness on the part of the congressional majority to hold the military and intelligence agencies to the same level of scrutiny as is applied to domestic agencies when it comes to insisting on efficiency and accurate accounting.

We therefore strongly urge you to resist efforts to continue to the pattern of a higher than necessary level of military spending at the expense of the non-military functions of the federal government, including those aspects of foreign policy which have also suffered from inadequate funding in past years. It is our responsibility to inform you that we strongly believe that a budget compromise must begin seriously the process of moving funds from the Pentagon and related agencies to the civilian side if we are to balance the budget while avoiding devastating cuts over the next five years in important non-military programs.

We of course share your view that America must remain the strongest nation in the world, and be well able within a significant margin of safety to meet genuine national security needs. But we believe that the current military budget significantly exceeds what is required in this regard, while important health, public safety, environmental, educational and other functions of the federal government will suffer greatly if Republican priorities are followed. And of course the suffering in this case does not fall abstractly on "programs", but rather on the American people who are the intended beneficiaries of this programmatic activity.

The following Members have signed onto the letter to the President.